Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/425566597

Downloaded on Mar 29, 2024

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

COMMENT

Bono's biggest sellout

Super Bowl show was the final blow to U2 singer's waning integrity

JUAN RODRIGUEZ
Special to The Gazette

What's wrong with this picture?

Jesse Helms, the U.S. "Senator No" who turned his back on Nelson Mandela, says to Bono: "You'll always have a friend here."

Paul O'Neil, the U.S. treasury secretary who said of Enron's wicked demise, "Companies come and go," calls Bono "my good friend."

Synergy abounds: the pope swipes his wraparound shades for the ultimate photo-op, and Bono dubs his high-powered pal Bill Gates "the pope of software."

Cap backward, deep in thought with Jean Chrétien, Bono pats Canadians on the heads for leading the good fight.

What can a poor boy do, except sing in a rock'n'roll band? You can't blame Bono for earnestly trying to "engage" America on its own pedestal, can you?

At the risk of sounding "cold," as this skinned Gen-X partance has it, consider that Bono might be suffering from delusions of grandeur.

"Heal thyself" is not exactly a rallying cry for the planet's fattest cats that Bono hobnobs with, men with big cojones and hearts of steel.

They play Bono like a violin, establishing bleeding-heart "cred" while reshaping the world in their corporate image.

He's the little bad boy invited to the grownups' parties because they know how to "handle" him. He's the "hep" conversation piece.

If rock is symbolic of rebellion, Bono is blasphemous to its spirit. You pay the price for breathing the rarefied wind of corporate globalism at the Waldorf.

And so pharmaceutical companies aren't really greedy pikers picking the pockets of the sick, says Bono, eschewing "easy bad guys and good guys."

Sure as sin, he's quick with the flip caviar-encrusted quip: "The great thing about hanging out with Republicans is that it's very unhip for both of us. There's a parity of pain here." Right on, dude.

INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCIES

Questioning Bono's motives is another matter. The pop star evidently believes he can walk into any room and change the world. But, I wonder, isn't this all about the Benjamins?

Consider U2 in a nutshell: having marched to the top of Reagan's era with anthemic rock climaxed by The Joshua Tree, they shifted toward internationalist tendencies with 1991's Achtung Baby.

Their interesting – if occasionally belaboured – experiment in postmodern iconography (Zooropa, Pop) eventually alienated U.S. fans and critics ("irony-ensconced rock'n'roll Liberace," wrote Salon.com). Uh-oh.

Realizing they were starting to get a little long in the tooth – average age 40.5 – they decided to make one last killing: All That You Can't Leave Behind, safe as milk. Voilà: it's a Beautiful Day ("Don't let it get away"), as bland and unprovocative as NSYNC.

Relentlessly touring with something called Elevation – post-irony earnestness, or cynical put-on? – the Irishmen became America's band.

Ten million copies and eight Grammy nominations later, and hey dude, U2's invited to America's ultimate keg party, the Super Bowl. Bono hypes: "We are here to bring peace to Brady and Bledsoe, to bring peace to the AFL and NFL." Bowls or Butt-head couldn't have said it any dumber.

On a heart-shaped stage – first rock band featured as a solo act at a Super Bowl halftime! – there's Bono braying a creepy New Age mantra: "What you don't have, you don't need it now." Try telling that to the hungry, homeless and infirm, or those Enron suckers suddenly out of jobs and pensions.

There's Bono wailing Where the Streets Have No Name, backed by a list of U.S. Sept. 11 victims' names scrolling upward in alphabetical order. Then the cathartic moment: Bono, lump in throat, opened his black jacket to reveal a Stars and Stripes lining. (Did he buy the thing off the Internet?)

This gesture cemented his status as Honorary American, free, free at last to join the nauseatingly long list of 9/11 profiteers.

It's cool to co-opt and sell out. Indeed, the flimflam that passed as the U.S. economy over the last decade – call it a shell game lining the pockets of a few at the expense of everyone else – was hyped as a 1960s-styled "people's revolution" (a scam scabrously and presciently chronicled in Thomas Frank's superb screed One Market Under God).

Bono knows the lesson: Davos tycoons rule!

I'm not young any more. This geezer is into music other than rock (jazz, classical, world beats), yet I believe deeply in the rebelliousness and iconclasm – call it punk – of rock'n'roll.

I still get a thrill discovering – or stumbling across – some new young band that typifies these qualities, just as Jerry Lee Lewis's Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On still sends shivers up my spine.

But corporate sounds – and the message of "Consume this" and "Show me the money" – turn my stomach.

That means U2, Bono.

◆ Juan Rodriguez, former music critic for the Montreal Star and The Gazette, has been writing about popular culture for numerous publications since 1966. His E-mail address is jrodccrs@hotmail.com.

AARON HARRIS, CP

"Heal thyself" is not exactly a rallying cry for the fat cats that Bono hobnobs with.

"Dakota Fanning is delicious." Journal de Montréal
"Bring your Kleenex, you will laugh, smile and cry." Nora Christina Bustos, RADIO-CANADA
"A touching and tender film. Dakota Fanning, a revelation !" Isabelle Racicot, FLASH
"Michelle Pfeiffer really gives the most amazing performance..." Roger Ebert, EBERT & ROEPER
"A motion picture that will stir your soul. You'll laugh, you'll cry. you'll love your heart." Paul Clinton, CNN
sean PENN michelle PFEIFFER
i am sam
love is all you need
The Gazette
NOW PLAYING!

TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE, FIRST YOU HAVE TO FEEL IT.
"A WINNING ROMANTIC COMEDY!"
★★★½ A Seductive Bonafide Crowd-Pleaser!
Italian For Beginners
NOW PLAYING!

WINNER GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD BEST ACTRESS - SISSY SPACEK
★★★★★ "In The Bedroom' makes the ordinary extraordinary with detailed character construction and expert acting."
A film by Todd Field
IN THE BEDROOM
SISSY SPACEK TOM WILKINSON NICK STAHL and MARISA TOMEI
NOW PLAYING!

OVER 120 TOP CRITICS AGREE THAT "GOSFORD PARK" IS "ONE OF THE BEST PICTURES OF THE YEAR"
GOSFORD PARK
A ROBERT ALTMAN FILM
The Gazette
NOW PLAYING!

WARNER'S ENTREPOT
CLOSING SALE!
EVERYTHING MUST BE SOLD!
Calvin Klein WARNERS OMSA
UP TO 85% OFF
Men's boxers
Women's intimate apparel
Women's and men's outerwear
accessories and much more
Galeries des Sources
3237 des Sources, D.D.O.
(514) 685-2633

A FUNNY, RAUNCHY COMEDY WITH A GREAT CAST!
SLACKERS
Higher Education Just Hit A New Low.
NOW PLAYING!

The Lord of the Rings
NOW PLAYING!

Amélie
NOW PLAYING!

NICOLE KIDMAN BEN CHAPLIN
BEFORE THEY SHARE A FUTURE, THEY HAVE TO SURVIVE HER PAST
SOMEBODY'S IN FOR A BIG SURPRISE
BIRTHDAY GIRL
NOW PLAYING!

www.allianceatlantis.com

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by Newspapers.com